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WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT FOODS AND NUTRITION HAS IMPROVED
THE HEALTH OF OUR FAMILY

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★ MAY 25 1934 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by Arltha Harrison, 4-H club member from Noxubee County, Mississippi, delivered in the 4-H club program, National Farm and Home Hour, Saturday, May 5, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

At the age of ten, I became a member of the Macon 4-H club, and served as Vice-president two years. My father being a Baptist Minister lived in the parsonage. His time of service in Macon expiring, he was called to Harrison Grove where he bought a six acre farm. Having to live with other people caused my mother and me to see the necessity of a home of our own. We began to urge father, who was a carpenter, to build a house. As I was the older daughter, I was responsible for many of our future plans.

As the foundation was being laid, mother and I, feeling that we should help, started a garden. Having been a regular club member and receiving instructions from our agent on balance meals for the family, I began studying the seed catalogues. We selected vegetables which would give strength and repair the bodies for this big task to be done by the family.

The most immediate and important task for me was to strive to keep my father and family well and strong. Since I had had lessons in meal planning and cooking, I succeeded in persuading mother to give me charge of the cooking of the dinners.

Up until this time my father ate very few vegetables, so my mother didn't serve them often, but I had posters at club meetings stressing the needs of vitamins and foods for growth and repair found in vegetables raw and cooked. So I began serving as had been instructed two or more vegetables each day. My father began tasting, finally took a generous helping of cooked vegetables and salads which improved his digestion. The family, seeing the good effect of eating vegetables upon father, became more interested in the growing and preparation of vegetables.

The family did not eat much bread, but when I entered the contest in better bread making, I insisted that my breads be eaten and criticized by the family. After several friendly complaints as well as compliments on my breads I was determined to make our family a bread eating family by living up to our club motto: "To make the best better." This I did daily until the contest was ended and the breads were judged. My muffins and biscuits won first place in the community and in the county and my family began to eat more bread.

As the house came closer to completion, I became more interested in giving the family better foods. Two rooms and the kitchen were made ready for our living. We were so happy in our first home where so many duties were to be performed by all. I asked to have the charge of the kitchen and all meals. My mother who was trying to help in every way with the building and yards gladly consented. This became my duty then and remains so today.

During the five years I have studied the 4-H nutrition program, assisted with the young orchard, cooperated in the garden project, gathered wild fruits, or conserved fruits and vegetables to serve every day in the year.

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The doctor has not visited our home in five years. I attribute this fact to the knowledge which I have obtained from the monthly visit of our agent, Miss Mabel R. Clopton, who has stressed food as a big issue in preserving our health and distributed the value literature given by the Nutrition and Food Preservation Specialist of the Extension Department of Mississippi.

Thus I feel that there is nothing more important in our lives than 4-H club work which brings all phases of home life to the community for the development of girls and boys. I intend always to boost 4-H club work.

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